A

SERMON

PREACHED

Before the

QUEEN,

AT

WHITE-HALL,

On *Wedneſday, March* 15. $169\frac{2}{3}$.

By *CHARLES HICKMAN*, D. D.
Chaplain in Ordinary to Their Majeſties.

Publiſhed by Her Majeſty's Special Command.

LONDON:

Printed for *Walter Kettilby*, at the *Biſhop's Head* in St. *Paul's* Church-Yard, 1693.

Dr. *HICKMAN*'s

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PHIL. IV. 11.

I have learn'd in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content.

THERE is nothing more apt to disturb our Minds, to interrupt our Happiness, or to have an ill effect upon our Religion; than too immoderate a concern for the outward Blessings, as we call them, of this World. And therefore there is no one point of Wisdom that is of a nearer importance to us, or of more Universal Use, than to know How to behave our selves with Moderation in this respect. And that we may do so, is one of the principal Ends which the Church proposes in this Solemn

time of Abſtinence and Mortification: That by withdrawing our ſelves from our uſual Entertainments, and ſtanding at a due diſtance from the World, we may diſcover the Vanity of thoſe Riches which uſed to puff us up, and ſee all things in their true Dimenſions and proper Colours.

And here 'tis the great advantage of Chriſtianity, nay, 'tis the peculiar happineſs which we enjoy under the Goſpel, that it affords us not only moſt excellent Precepts of this kind; but alſo it ſhews us thoſe Precepts confirm'd by moſt excellent Examples. A Heathen Philoſopher may talk very Elegantly and Judiciouſly about deſpiſing of the World, and may preſcribe us very uſeful Rules; but if ever we hope to reduce thoſe Rules to Practice, it muſt be by the help of Religion: If we would find Men, who by their Lives, bear Witneſs to their Doctrines, and take care to make their Words good; we muſt look for them in the Acts and Monuments of the Church.

No Man has taken more pains or ſhew'd more ingenuity in Teaching us the Art of Contentment than *Seneca*, that Learned Heathen.

Heathen. But then, He teaches us an Art which he never exercis'd himſelf: For all the while he was Writing in praiſe of Poverty, he was enjoying a great Eſtate, and endeavouring to make it greater. This looks like putting a trick upon the World, and driving them out of conceit with their riches, only that we may get them for our ſelves: And therefore no Man ſpeaks with authority in ſuch a caſe, but He that ſpeaks experimentally; who like our Saviour and his Apoſtles, having voluntarily relinquiſh'd a ſtate of Plenty, and actually undergone a ſtate of Want, can ſay with S. *Paul* in the words of my Text, *Now I have learn'd in whatſoever ſtate I am, therewith to be content.*

In which Words there are Three Things to be obſerv'd,

I. That the ſtate of Man in this World is apt to change.

II. That we have great occaſion for this Vertue of Contentment, in every change of our Eſtate.

III. That This Contentment is a Virtue which comes not upon us by Nature, nor

is

is entail'd upon any particular Eſtate: But it muſt be learnt, *I have learn'd in whatſoever ſtate I am, therewith to be content.*

Upon which Heads I muſt beg leave to ſpeak briefly and plainly; and if the courſe of my Text leads us to ſome Melancholy Truths, ſome Mortifying Humbling Reflections, 'tis no more than the Seaſon allows, and our circumſtances require: and a ſeaſonable Truth, I hope, needs no Apology.

I. Of the Firſt. The Profeſſion which is here made by the Apoſtle in my Text, is grounded upon this Suppoſition, That our State is always liable to Change; and there is no certain eſtabliſhment to be expected in this World. S. *Paul* himſelf, tho' he was a principal Favourite of Heaven, yet could not promiſe himſelf any ſetled Portion upon Earth: tho' his Portion was generally very bad, yet ſtill he expected to find it worſe, and in my Text prepar'd againſt it.

And from hence we may learn, not to depend upon any poſſeſſion of our own, not to be addicted to ſuch or ſuch a State, but

but to ſit looſe unto the World, and wear our Riches as we do our Cloaths, though they are never ſo convenient for us, yet we muſt change when the Seaſon comes, and not let them grow ſo faſt to our body, that it ſhall endanger our skin to pluck them off.

This changeableneſs of our Fortune we are apt to complain of as one of the greateſt unhappineſſes of our Nature. But that is our miſtake; for there is a very remarkable Providence of God in this variety of our affairs; it is not for his Diverſion, but for our Good, that he pulleth down one, and ſetteth up another: Sometimes he exalts us, to encourage our Vertue; and ſometimes he abaſes us, to quicken our Devotion: and accordingly as we ſtand affected to the things above, ſo he helps us forwards, either by enlarging, or leſſening, our proportion of things below, and takes care to accommodate our Fortunes to the exigences of our Religion.

Some men's Religion thrives beſt in a barren Ground, others agree better with a richer Soil: Sometimes our Spirits require a Whip and Spur to make them go, and ſometimes

they want a Bit and Bridle to hold them in; and accordingly God, who is the wiſe diſpoſer of all worldly Goods, either encourages us by Proſperity, or checks us by Diſtreſs.

When our Temper is too heavy and ſluggiſh, he helps it forward; when 'tis too forward and preſumptuous, he holds it in; and 'tis this changeableneſs of our own minds that occaſions all thoſe changes of our Fortune. Were we but ſettled within our ſelves, no doubt but our Eſtates would be ſo too; if our hearts were right towards God, no doubt but he would give us our hearts deſire; if Temporal Proſperity were ſuch a ſtate as is moſt conſiſtent with our Religion, and moſt likely to promote our ſpiritual good, no doubt but we all ſhould proſper: For God himſelf takes *a pleaſure in the proſperity of his Servants*, as much as they themſelves.

But becauſe our corruptible hearts are apt to grow reſty, and ſenſual, and ſupine, under this eaſie ſtate of life, and to think the leſs of Heaven, the more we enjoy our ſelves upon Earth; therefore God has laid us open

to

to changes and chance, and made our Eſtates as unſteady and fickle as our ſelves: By an unaccountable revolution he alters the face of our Affairs, and by a turn of the Wheel he ſhifts us from one extreme of Fortune to the other. One Man goes to Bed a Prince, and riſes up a Beggar; another goes to Bed a Beggar, and riſes up a Prince; and by the preſent circumſtances of to day, we can make no certain judgment of to morrow.

This is ſo notorious a Truth, that the bare mentioning of it is enough; and indeed, if this Truth were but as carefully apply'd, as 'tis univerſally confeſs'd, there would be no need of mentioning it at all. But though all men talk of the inconſtancy of the World, yet how few are there that lay it to their heart, or manage their lives accordingly!

We know there is no hold to be laid on Fortune, no ſecurity to be found on Earth; and yet, in hopes to ſecure that little which we have, we are always labouring to purchaſe more: and ſo we graſp at more tha nwe can compaſs, 'till by our Covetouſneſs we loſe it all.

We dream of Riches and Pleaſures, and

a lasting establishment of our Estate; but we don't love to think of, and therefore we never dream of those suddain changes, to which we and our Estates are both expos'd. We love to build Castles in the Air, and please our selves with groundless Fancies, and conceive mighty hopes upon little or no Foundations; and though every day shews us grievous disappointments, and desperate falls of other men, yet we will not be forewarn'd our selves.

In a Word, Though every Man is sensible that his condition may quickly alter for the worse, yet when we are in prosperity we contract such habits of indulgence and sloth, and fulness of Bread, as must needs make us unhappy when the alteration comes: and therefore it was well advis'd of a Heathen, and very fit for a Christian's practice, That we should set apart some certain times for abstinence and retirement, and try what it is to live without the use of those Riches which we have, that we may know how to live without them when we have them not. And so I proceed to the

Second Thing observable in my Text, That

That we have great occaſion for this Vertue of Contentment in whatſoever ſtate we are, whether it be a ſtate of Proſperity or Diſtreſs.

I doubt not but this Propoſition will ſeem ſtrange to the generality of Mankind, who are apt to think that there is no need of this Contentment in Proſperity, and no poſſibility of it in Diſtreſs: but upon a diligent impartial ſearch into the nature of the Thing, we ſhall find the direct contrary of this to be true; That the rich Man, with his leave, ſtands in greateſt need of this Art of Contentment, and yet the poor Man is moſt apt to learn it. But,

1. I muſt ſhew you what the true meaning of this Contentment is.

'Tis a common Opinion in the World, That this contentedneſs of mind conſiſts in being highly pleas'd and ſatisfi'd, and entertain'd with our preſent Lot, and thinking our ſelves very happy in our condition; ſo happy, that we can now ſit down in peace, and enjoy our ſelves, and deſire nothing better, nothing more: but this is a great miſtake, and whoſoever lies under it, ſhall never be contented while he lives. For

For all this World, if it were entirely at our command, is not able to afford us this kind of ſatisfaction; and whoſoever lays a greater ſtreſs upon the World than it can bear, will find himſelf not only diſappointed of his groundleſs hopes, but defeated alſo of that natural aſſiſtance which he might otherwiſe have expected from it.

While we live in this World, we muſt expect, in whatever ſtate we are, to find a mixture of Good and Evil: and therefore the true way to Contentment, is to bear them both with an indifference of Mind. But he that is apt to be overjoy'd at the one, will always be over-troubled at the other. When the Scales are in motion, they will go up and down by turns; the only way to be quiet is to keep the Balance even, to live in an equal temper of mind, and moderate our ſelves between the extremes of Paſſion; and that we may not be oppreſs'd with Trouble, we muſt take care not to be at any time over-charg'd with Joy.

This is the true temperate Climate in which every wiſe Man deſires to live, but the extremities of Heat or Cold are alike uneaſie to us, and

and we generally fall from one of these extremes to the other.

Pleasure and Pain are like Light and Darkness, all places in the World have their equal share of them, first or last; only that place is best which has them in moderate proportions, and at convenient returns. But they who enjoy the longest Day in Summer, in the Winter will be troubled with the longest Night.

Just so they, who make it their only business to be easie, and would have all things answer their expectation, and are bent upon having their own Will, must frequently find their expectations cross'd; and then they prove the most uneasie Creatures in the World. They cannot bear any little Accident that thwarts their Designs, but are disquieted for very Trifles, and upon every disappointment, they rave as if they were undone.

And This always comes of being fond of our own Ways, and proposing some mighty Happiness in the accomplishing of our Desires. This is a Childish Fancy rather than a Manly Prudence, and may more properly be called Humor than Content: At least, 'tis such a Contentment as God never intended for us.

He

He has given us the good things of the Earth, only to ſtay our Stomachs, but not to fill or ſatisfie our Minds; Not that we ſhould ſit down in Peace, and feaſt our ſelves with them as at a Banquet, but only *uſe them for a Well*, as the Pſalmiſt ſays, *while we paſs thro' this vale of miſery.* He never intended this World for a place of Entertainment, for fear we ſhould be tempted to ſet up our reſt here, and give up all hopes, and all thoughts of Heaven.

And therefore this Contentment which is recommended to us by the Apoſtle in my Text, does not ſignifie that we ſhould be fond of our ſtation in the World, or delighted with it: If we can but bear with it, 'tis all that God requires; if we can but keep our Minds from being diſquieted by thoſe inconveniences, which daily and neceſſarily happen to us, 'tis all that need be done.

'Tis but a negative Happineſs at the beſt, that we be not interrupted in our affairs, nor diſturb'd in our Devotion, by too ſolicitous a concern either for the Good or the Evil of the World, but regard them both with an indifference of Mind, as things that may

may be endur'd either way, but do not deſerve any tenderer conſideration, nor to come any nearer to our Hearts.

'Tis thus that we muſt maintain the dignity of our Soul, by keeping the World at a due diſtance from it: We muſt account of all earthly things as below us, and whether they ebb or flow, we muſt keep on our conſtant pace, and be no more diverted by them, than the Sun is interrupted in his courſe by the blowing of contrary Winds. This is the true Contentment, and for this we muſt be beholden not to our Fortune but to our ſelves: 'tis a Virtue that muſt grow within us, and owes very little to any outward circumſtances of our Eſtate. For

1. If we are in a ſtate of Proſperity: This ſtate ſome think they could eaſily be contented with, but tis' their ignorance that makes them think ſo. For this is a ſtate that beſides the fomenting of our Luſts, is very apt to raiſe turbulent Paſſions and mutinous Thoughts within us: to make us envious againſt our Superiors, as having out-ſtript us in our own Way; jealous of our Equals, as being the Rivals of our Fortune; and inſolent to our Inferiors, as not being ſo great and happy, and Worthy as our ſelves.

If we are High, we desire to rise one step Higher yet; and when we have gain'd that point, we are as far from being Contented as before. As long as we find one step above us, we are never well till we get to the very Pinacle of Fortune; and when we are there, we can't be well neither, because we have no higher to go.

When we are there, we expect some glorious Prospects, some mighty Pleasures, or some vast Advantages from our Height; but alas, there is nothing of that to be found, nothing to make us any tolerable amends for the Pains and Trouble we have been at in climbing up so High. Nothing but more dangers, and more troubles still, and a giddiness of Head besides; and if we are Wise, we shall wish our selves well down again.

As long as there are other Men as Foolish and Ambitious as our selves, they will never let us rise in quiet, at least they will not let us rest in Peace; they think all the while we are but mounting upon their Shoulders, and rising in their wrong, and who would stand the mark of one Man's Envy, another Man's Malice, and a third Man's Revenge? or who can ever rise so high, as to be above all their reach? Or

Or if we could poſſibly be ſecure from the effects of their Envy, and Malice, and Revenge; yet we can never get above Reproach, their Tongues will reach us tho' they cannot hurt us with their Teeth. How Natural, and indeed for the moſt part, how reaſonable is it for Men to ſay, *Lo theſe are the ungodly, theſe proſper in the World!* And who would thruſt himſelf into ſuch a ſtation, where all good Men have reaſon to ſuſpect him, and all bad Men are ready to pull him down?

Theſe are indeed Mortifying, Humbling Conſiderations; enough, one would think, to cure any Man's Ambition. But there are worſe than theſe to come: For this love of Mony brings ſuch a temptation upon our Virtue, and lays ſuch a bait before our Soul, as puts us in apparent danger of forfeiting the Love of God, and all our eternal intereſt.

'Tis a dreadful ſaying of our Saviour, That 'tis *eaſier for a Camel to paſs through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man, a man that truſts in his riches, to enter into the kingdom of God.* But 'tis very true, and the reaſon is very plain, the love of riches puts ſuch a blind upon his underſtanding, that he cannot judge between right and wrong, but always determines in

favour of his intereſt: and where the Idol prevails, neither God, nor Religion, nor common Reaſon can be heard.

It takes away our conſideration, makes us preſume upon our quality, and allow our ſelves in many unlawful injurious practices upon account of our being Rich, when God makes no ſuch allowance for us. He conſiders not ſo much the Temptation which a rich Man lies under to Sin, as the obligations which he has laid upon him to Virtue and Gratitude.

Tho' we may reſpect our ſelves, yet *God is no reſpecter of perſons*, or if there is any difference of regard which he ſhews to the ſeveral ranks of Men, his favour always inclines to the poorer ſort. Who then would be ambitious of Proſperity? who would chuſe ſuch a State, as is more ſubject to Temptations, and yet leſs capable of excuſe?

Nay, what is worſt of all, it ſets a Man above reproof, and gives his Vice a kind of a priviledge not to be moleſted; and ſo not only expoſes him to Sin, but takes away the proper and ordinary means of his Amendment.

And now, upon a view of the whole Matter, the beſt that can be ſaid, even of an honeſt

neſt Proſperity, and a well-gotten great Eſtate, is that it is ſuch a State as may be indur'd, but does not deſerve to be courted: And a Man had need of a double portion of Wiſdom and Temper that can endure it; otherwiſe he will be apt to be carried away with a fond imagination of his own worth, and to grow ſo fooliſh, and inſolent, and wicked, that he is not to be indur'd himſelf. *Ut tu fortunam, ſic nos te Celſe feremus.*

And therefore 'tis a very proper expreſſion in my Text, That a wiſe man may bring himſelf to ſuch a paſs, that he ſhall be *contented* to be Rich, but he will never be *pleas'd* with being ſo. If God does lay the burden upon him to be his Steward for the Poor, to diſtribute his bleſſings to thoſe that want, to labour firſt to get an Eſtate, and then labour more to beſtow it well, a good Man will patiently bear the perſecution, and will be contented with it, but ſtill he had rather be without it.

But to keep a vaſt Eſtate only to look upon, with that frivolous pretence of providing for Poſterity; or to ſpend a vaſt Eſtate, in ſtupid Entertainments, formal Gallantries, and fenceleſs Noiſe, is what no wiſe Man would be contented with. And

And yet this is all which worldly men admire in prosperity, and if they can but have where-with-all to riot and domineer, and make a show, with such a state they think they could be content. If the Projector can but have enough to feed his Pride, his Luxury, or his Covetousness, he desires no more; but he little thinks that these are three such devouring Evils as never say, *It is enough.*

And now, if we have duly consider'd the danger of Riches, and weigh'd the reasons why a wise Man will not be so mightily, so readily contented with Prosperity, we may well guess, what perhaps we did not think before, That a poor Man, who is free from all these dangers, has great reason to be content. And yet,

2. Poverty it self, with all its privacy, security, and ease, has great need also of this vertue of Contentment. Not that the danger of this State is so much, but the vexation is commonly more. Tho' Fasting is better for our Health, yet 'tis not so apt to preserve our temper, as being full. Though a course of labour is more wholesome, yet withal, 'tis more troublesome than a State of ease.

But these are not the troubles which make

Poverty

Poverty ſo uneaſie to us, all the burdens which are laid upon our fleſh, our ſpirit can bear well enough; the worſt of it is, that Poverty is apt to break the Spirit of a Man, and to lay a great oppreſſion upon his Soul, and Patience is as neceſſary a Vertue for the poor Man, as Contentment is for the Rich. And to prove this, one or two Inſtances will ſuffice. As,

1. The poor Man has need of a great ſtock of *Patience*, to encounter that ſcorn, and deriſion, and contempt, which he meets with in the World. 'Twas this that made *David* in his troubles cry out, *My Soul is filled with the ſcornful reproof of the proud.* So full, that as he ſaies in another place, *Their reproach hath broken my heart.* 'Twas this that made *Job* cry out in his Adverſity, *Have pity on me, O my Friends, for the hand of God hath touch'd me.* But inſtead of pitying, there are *Job*'s Comforters in the World, who love to *perſecute thoſe whom God hath ſmitten, and vex thoſe whom he hath wounded.* Who make it their buſineſs to inſult over a poor Man's calamity, and take a barbarous pleaſure in adding to his afflictions.

There is ſo much ſpite, and malignity, and venom

venom in this Treatment, as the Spirit of a Man can hardly bear. All the hunger and pain, and nakedneſs of Poverty are nothing like it; all theſe are inflicted upon us by the hand of a great and gracious God, and are intended for our Good, and therefore they be endur'd; but to be deſpis'd and trampled on by our fellow creatures, is ſuch intolerable inſolence, ſuch unnatural oppreſſion, as gave *David* good cauſe to Pray, *Let me now fall into the hands of God, but let me not fall into the hands of men.*

Whatſoever calamities or loſſes befal the Poor, yet Pity one would think is his undoubted Right, ſuch a Tenure as he can never forfeit, ſuch a Property as can never change. God himſelf, when he takes from us all things beſides, yet leaves us a Right to this, that the Pity which we find from Men, may ſupple our Spirits, and mollifie our Hearts, and ſo help to bring God's good purpoſes to paſs upon us. But this inſolent inſulting uſage is enough to ſpoil all again, it does but exaſperate and provoke, and is enough to harden a bruiſed breaking Heart.

And yet this is the uſage which diſtreſſed Men commonly meet with in the World, if they

they have not power enough to demand juſtice, they ſeldom find credit enough to move Pity: and 'tis a vexatious thing to ſtand in need of Pity; but to need it, and not to find it, is vexation upon vexation.

2. Another perplexing circumſtance of Poverty, which makes a wiſe Man ſtand in great need of Patience under it, is, that in the common opinion of the World, it lays a reproach upon his Wiſdom, takes off all the weight and authority of his Judgment; and the cleareſt Reaſon ſhall be born down, if it has not a large ſtock of intereſt and favour to ſupport it.

And this is a Mortification worſe than all the reſt, tho' we are depriv'd of our outward goods, yet our Reaſon, one would think, had no dependence upon Fortune, and might be allow'd us ſtill. But it muſt not be; He that is needy, muſt needs be ſimple too, and his Diſcourſe ſhall make the ſame Figure, and run the ſame Fortune with himſelf.

If a Poor Man could *ſave a City*, ſaies *Solomon*, yet his Wiſdom is deſpis'd, and his Words ſhall not be heard. What has he to do to ſave a City, who has nothing of his own to ſave! as if Senſe and Underſtanding were entail'd

only upon Men in great Eſtate. *We are they that ought to ſpeak.*

A word in ſeaſon, ſays the Wiſe Man, *is like apples of gold in pictures of ſilver.* But commonly 'tis the Silver and Gold that ſets the gloſs upon the Words, and he that has plenty of theſe at command ſpeaks every word in ſeaſon.

Thus *Job* tells us, that when he was in Proſperity *men gave ear unto him, and waited, and kept ſilence at his counſel, and after his words they ſpoke not again.* But in his diſtreſs his Reaſonings could not be allow'd of, and his old friends would hardly hear him ſpeak; 'twas this that afflicted the good Man more, and laid a greater ſtreſs upon his Patience, than either his loſſes, or his ſores, or all the Wounds inflicted upon him by the hand of God.

For right Reaſon to be run down by favour, and contradicted by a ſenceleſs noiſe, and Truth it ſelf to be rejected becauſe it does not come from a flouriſhing renowned Hand; is not ſo much a diſreſpect to him that ſpeaks it, as an affront to Nature, and a diſhonour to the God of Truth; 'tis ſo groſs a partiality, ſuch a palpable prejudice, as every good Man muſt needs reſent: and yet this is commonly the Poor Man's fate, and what is worſe, he can't tell.

tell how to help it: And therefore in the

3. And laſt place, 'tis time we ſhould ſhew him how to bear it, *I have learn'd*, ſays S. *Paul*, *in whatſoever ſtate I am, therewith to be content.* 'Tis an Art which he learn'd of Chriſt himſelf, who endur'd all theſe contradictions of Sinners, and more; and yet in Patience he poſſeſſed his Soul, and left us an example, that we ſhould not be *wearied and faint in mind*, when the ſame Tryals fall upon us.

Tho' he was the very God of Truth, yet he was contented for a time to lye under the ſuſpicion of an Impoſtor. And who are We? What mighty credit do we look for in the World, what curious Arts and Sciences are we Maſters of, that we cannot bear a contradiction, nor endure to have a ſlight put upon our underſtanding?

Tho' He was Lord of Heaven and Earth, and had all the riches of both at his command, yet how Poor did he make himſelf for our ſakes, and in his humiliation endure ſuch inſolence and affronts, as were more ignominious than Poverty, and more painful than Death it ſelf?

And why ſhould the Diſciple think himſelf better than his Maſter, or look for better uſage?

Nay, Why ſhould we repine at thoſe Evils which God inflicts upon us only for our Good? 'Tis only to humble us that he keeps us low: and if our afflictions have had their due effect, we can bear them well enough; if not, 'tis fit we ſhould bear them a little longer.

If therefore we would learn from my Text to be content, we muſt learn to be vertuous and humble, and then the thing is done. For 'tis nothing but the vices and paſſions at our Heart, that riſe in our Stomach, and ſowre every condition of life, and make it grievous to us. If theſe were but once remov'd, our Life would be very eaſie, and our Souls might be very calm, in whatſoever State we were. We ſhould be ſo far from complaining of our Poverty, and being aſham'd of our Diſtreſs, that we ſhould be aſham'd only of our complaints.

By this method how eaſily might we bring our ſelves to that Apoſtolical State, of *having nothing, and yet enjoying all things?* Does not the Sun ſhine as warm, and the Air blow as freſh, and the Earth breath as fragrant upon the poor Man, as the Rich? Have they not an equal ſhare in all the beauties, and all the real benefits of Nature? No,

No, ſays the rich Man. He! a poor precarious Creature, has no ſuch thing as any property in the World; but all theſe Goods are mine: Theſe Houſes and theſe Lands are my real Eſtate; theſe Barns, and theſe Coffers, and all full, are my proper perſonal Eſtate: theſe Bonds and Indentures, theſe Locks and Bars, ſecure them to me, and mark them for my own.

Thou Fool! this Night ſhall all theſe things be taken from thee, and then, what is thy own? Canſt thou incloſe the Elements too, or lock up the Winds and Seas? If thou canſt not, then that which thou calleſt thy own to day, may be any bodies, or no bodies Own to Morrow.

There was once juſt ſuch another fooliſh Man at *Athens*, who having nothing to do all his Life, but to ſtand gazing upon the Sea, fancy'd that all the Ships which came ſailing into the Harbour, were his Own. A very rich, and a very happy man in his own conceit; and that's the beſt title which moſt men have to thoſe Riches which they call their Own.

Yet ſtill the rich Man inſiſts upon his Right, and will not be beaten from it; That all theſe things

things are in his own poſſeſſion, and are reſerv'd for his own uſe; and ſo barring accidents, he is reſolv'd to uſe them, and to increaſe them too.

But what is all this for? Is it to eat a little more? No, 'tis only to have a great deal more than he can eat. Is it to be well attended, and ſerv'd at eaſe? No, 'tis to have ſo many Attendants for him to ſerve, that all his eaſe is gone. 'Tis all but noiſineſs, and tumult, and ſhow; which if a man could procure it, with a *ſalvo* to his Religion, yet God knows it is not worth his while. For when he ſits down by himſelf, and ſums up his Accounts, the up-ſhot is commonly no more than this, That the rich Man has the more Meat, but the poor Man has the better Stomach. The more is the rich Man's misfortune that he can't enjoy what he has, and the more his ſhame for engroſſing more than he can enjoy.

Thus we ſee that Contentment is an eaſie Vertue for a poor man to learn. But after all this, What can we ſay to perſuade a rich Man to be contented? What method can we propoſe to him to live at eaſe? Why truly none, but what we have propos'd already,

(*i. e.*)

(*i. e.*) that he would remember the *Camel*, and conſider what a very narrow paſſage he has to go: and therefore that he would contract his Sails, and not ſtrut in his Riches, as if they were his Own; but look upon them as God's Treaſure, put into his hands to be diſpenc'd unto thoſe that want.

That his buſineſs is to behave himſelf humbly and temperately in the midſt of his abundance, as if he were actually poor; but liberally and charitably withal, as deſigning to make many Rich: that he would conſider, that in whatſoever ſtate he is, nothing but Humility can give him either real Honour, or true Content; and therefore he ſhould not ſwell with his Bags, nor grow high-minded upon the ſcore of his Riches, but always ſet ſome objects of Pity before his Eyes, on purpoſe to keep him down.

There let him ſhow the greatneſs of his Eſtate, and what is better, the greatneſs of his Soul, in the meekneſs of his Converſation, and condeſcending to men of low Eſtate; in countenancing thoſe that are dejected, and ſupporting thoſe that are diſtreſſed, and ſupplying the neceſſities of the Poor, with a comfortable, a ſeaſonable, and a ſuitable

able relief: And whileſt he thus lays out upon others his Treaſures on Earth, he ſhall *lay up for himſelf Treaſures in Heaven.*

Theſe are Vertues which, tho' they grow but rarely in a fertile Soil, yet are the only guard and ornament of proſperity, and are more neceſſary for the rich Man than all his Locks and Bars, than all the Seals and Indentures in the World. Theſe are the qualifications that muſt render him truly great, and truly happy, and advance him above thoſe very Riches and Honours which he enjoys. 'Tis this that gives him an aſcendant over the World, which is indeed the greateſt Character, and the higheſt Perfection, that is attainable by Man, here below.

When Goodneſs and Greatneſs go hand in hand, they draw the admiration of all the World upon them, and ſet a glorious luſtre upon one another, and make up a true, tho' faint repreſentation of God himſelf. For *Thus ſaith the High and Lofty One that inhabiteth Eternity, whoſe Name is Holy: I dwell in the High and Holy Place, with him alſo that is of an humble Spirit.*

To which Moſt High, &c.

F I N I S.

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